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FM AMEMBASSY ASMARA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9652  
INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE  
RUEHDO/AMEMBASSY DOHA 0114  
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 1296  
RUEHYN/AMEMBASSY SANAA 1848  
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RHMFISS/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RUMICEA/JICCENT MACDILL AFB FL  
RUEPADJ/CJTF-HOA J2X CAMP LEMONIER DJ  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ASMARA 000249

SIPDIS

LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/06/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [ER](#) [SO](#) [DJ](#)

SUBJECT: ARS READY TO TALK

ASMARA 00000249 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald K. McMullen for reason 1.4 (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: The leadership of the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) is committed to UN-brokered discussions with representat

[1](#)2. (C) OFF TO DJIBOUTI - FOR GOOD?  
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Three senior ARS leaders met with the ambassador and poloff May 6 to discuss the Djibouti talks. The decision to participate in the UN-facilita

[1](#)3. (C) THREE-STAGE TALKS, BUT WITH WHOM? -----

The ARS will have a seven-person delegation at the talks, with Abdirahman Abdi the designated "team leader." (See bio note below.) Other ARS le

[1](#)4. (SBU) WANTED: STRIPED SHIRT WITH BLUE HELMET -----

The ambassador noted that Ethiopia wanted to withdraw from Somalia, a goal shared by the ARS. How best to establish conditions to enable that t

[1](#)5. (C) "WORST EVER" CONDITIONS ON THE GROUND -----

The ARS leaders said violence and chaos in Somalia was at the worst level in 17 years. They said that average Somalis focus their frustration a

[1](#)6. (C) THE ARS AND AL-SHABAAB  
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Al-Shabaab's social, religious, and political ideology is not popular with Somalis, the ARS leaders stated, but Al-Shabaab has gained support f

[1](#)7. (C) FRIENDS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD  
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The ARS leaders affirmed that Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Yemen have been supportive. Libya "is hard to read," they mused. While Eritrea's

[1](#)8. (C) USG POLITICAL AND MORAL SUPPORT SOUGHT -----

The ARS leaders feel that by participating in the Djibouti talks they are going out on a limb to promote peace and stability in Somalia; they f

[1](#)9. (C) BIO NOTE ON ABDIRAHMAN ABDI  
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Reportedly tagged as the ARS "team leader" in the Djibouti talks, Abdirahman Abdi is tall, broad, relatively young, and well-spoken. He has stu